

Fantini - 1865

FANTIN-LATOUR AND DALOU



COLLECTING FOR THE MUSEUM

A museum's collections grow slowly and in various ways in accordance with what may be available, the amount of acquisition funds, the generosity of donors, and the aesthetic judgment of the museum's curators and director.

Over the years, objects acquired at different times and in different places become related as they take their place in the Museum's galleries. The subjects of this publication are further related in time and country (mid-19th century France), but all were acquired at different times and before

their importance in art history was generally recognized.

The two articles which follow, by pointing out their relationship and placing them in historical context, give meaning to these objects, and thus another reason for the continuing quest for works of art of high quality. The visual pleasure of the objects themselves is increased by a greater understanding of them.

Otto Wittmann, Director

Cover
HENRI FANTIN-LATOUR
Flowers and Fruit, 1866
Oil on canvas
Signed on upper left: Fantin 1866
28³/₄ x 23¹/₂ in. (73 x 59.6 cm.)
Ex-coll: C.S. Gulbenkian
Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey
51.363

TWO PAINTINGS BY FANTIN-LATOIR

During the 1850's in France there arose a new attitude toward subject matter in art which called for the depiction of modern life and our actual surroundings rather than pictures of past history, faraway places and the realm of the imagination. A large number of the artists who came to maturity in the 1850's had their artistic roots in this new realism and many had worked at least briefly with its foremost champion, the painter Gustave Courbet. Two artists of this generation were Henri Fantin-Latour and Jules Dalou. Although they seem never to have become more than acquaintances, their paths crossed at several times during their long productive careers.

In the early 1850's both Fantin (as he signed his pictures to distinguish them from those of his artist father) and Dalou were students of perhaps the greatest teacher in Paris at that time, Lecoq de Boisbaudran. Among their fellow students were many artists who would achieve fame in the next few decades, men such as Auguste Rodin, James Tissot and Alphonse Legros (all of whom are represented in the Museum's collections). Both Fantin and Dalou were quite successful within their lifetimes, their work being very popular in England as well as in France. And, as we shall see, Fantin and Dalou also shared many themes in their work.

In their respective spheres of painting and sculpture they are rather complementary figures in the evolution of mid-nineteenth century realism. Yet despite their roots in realism and their belief in the close observation and study of nature they were also romantics at heart. Their works cover a wide spectrum from wholly imaginative allegorical compositions inspired by music or patriotism to straightforward portraiture and scenes of daily

life. Almost exact contemporaries, Fantin and Dalou successfully attained a dual significance as both innovators and traditionalists during a period of constant revolutionary upheaval in the arts.

Born in 1836 at Grenoble in mountainous southeastern France, Fantin was taken at an early age to live in Paris, the city which would be his lifelong home. Jean-Théodore Fantin-Latour, his father, a minor painter of portraits and religious pictures, had decided to move from Grenoble to Paris in 1841 when the small city could no longer provide him with enough commissions to support a growing family. Like so many artists' children, Fantin began to show a talent for art at an early age. As his first teacher, his father was a strict taskmaster who made the boy complete every study he began. The perseverance he learned from his father developed his natural talent and soon he was assisting his father on his commissions. In 1850 with some natural reluctance Jean-Théodore gave up his son's valuable assistance to enable the boy to study at an art school. This was the Ecole de Dessin where the extraordinary Lecoq de Boisbaudran taught. A gifted teacher, the core of his program was the training of the memory. His students were taught to observe closely and completely absorb what they saw in order to reproduce it entirely from memory. That Fantin excelled in this school is perhaps a tribute to the perseverance learned from his father.

In 1853 Fantin sought admission to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the national art school, as acceptance there virtually assured an artist would be able to exhibit his work and win commissions. But, like many talented young artists of this era, he failed to please the judges at the entrance competitions



Figure 1
 HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836-1904)
Das Rheingold, Act I, Scene 1, 1876
 Lithograph
 Signed on lower left: Fantin 76
 Inscribed on margins: *Rheingold/Richard Wagner*
A Monsieur A. Lascoux/Souvenir de Bayreuth
 20 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (50.9 x 33.7 cm.)
 Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey
 12.1277

and was denied admission. Partly by design and partly by necessity the Louvre became Fantin's next teacher. He began to make copies of the masters he most admired such as Delacroix and Veronese, Rembrandt and Hals, Chardin and Watteau, and for many years he earned his living by the sale of these copies.

It was also at the Louvre that Fantin met many struggling fellow artists such as Edouard Manet and a young American, James McNeill Whistler. Despite their very different personalities Fantin and Whistler became close friends. The retiring and intensely private person that was Fantin and the aggressive, insistently public personality that was Whistler, were indeed strange comrades. However, it was probably because of this extreme polarity of personalities that they were of such great help to each other early in their careers. Fantin impressed Whistler with his seriousness and set a necessary example of hard work for the brilliant, impatient American. Whistler, in his turn,

was of considerable help in securing contacts for commissions for the shy Fantin, contacts he might never have made himself.

Perhaps the most important such introduction of Fantin's career occurred when Whistler invited him to England in 1859. His sister Nathalie having recently been committed to the insane asylum at Charenton, his paintings having been rejected in his first attempt to exhibit at the annual Salon, Fantin was quite discouraged. His first visit to England as the guest of Whistler's sister and her husband, Seymour Haden, brought Fantin a much needed change and, most importantly, some valuable new friends. For it was in 1859 through Whistler that Fantin met Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Edwards who became his devoted friends and unofficial agents in England. Edwards, a successful lawyer and an artist in his free time, found many purchasers for Fantin's paintings in England, especially for his flower still lifes. During the difficult years of Fantin's early career, Edwards helped to

Figure 2
 HILAIRE GERMAIN EDGAR DEGAS (1834-1917)
Mademoiselle Victoria Dubourg, 1867-68
 Oil on canvas
 Signed on lower right: Degas
 32 x 25½ in. (81.2 x 64.7 cm.)
 Ex-coll: Edgar Degas; Mme. Lazare Weiller;
 Paul Louis Weiller;
 Mr. and Mrs. William E. Levis
 Bequest of William E. Levis
 63.45



provide a necessary modicum of financial security to continue his work.

It was after a visit to the Edwards in 1861, his second visit to England, that Fantin began attending classes at Courbet's short-lived "school of realism". But Fantin's stay there was very brief for he could not confine himself to any one doctrine of art, for all his admiration of Courbet and his work. This same year Fantin finally had his work accepted for exhibition at the Salon and his career was thus officially launched in France.

When in 1863 one of the two paintings he submitted for the Salon was rejected, Fantin exhibited it at the famous *Salon des Refusés*, the event which marked the beginning of the end in French art of the Academy's domination. Fantin was, of course, a friend of Manet from his early days of copying at the Louvre. He was also a friend of Monet, Renoir and of most of the Impressionists. But like Manet and Degas, another friend, Fantin

did not share the Impressionist enthusiasm for the momentary effects of painting outdoors under variable natural light and had no interest in creating paintings where light is the true subject.

Fantin always painted in the studio where he could control the light himself, and, within this controlled environment, he achieved a personal handling of light and atmosphere which is unmistakably his. Very early in his career Fantin experimented with the strong chiaroscuro of Rembrandt, but he rather quickly developed a brighter, more diffused light which brings an amazing clarity to his forms at the same time that they seem enveloped in nearly tangible air. This crystalline sharpness of vision is a product of Fantin's close observation of nature, but also of his retentive visual memory, an ability to hold a form in his mind's eye so completely that the result is nearly visionary in its clarity. In Fantin's works we seem to have the actuality and the essence at the same time.

Sharing elements with both the Washington and Lisbon paintings, the Toledo still life demonstrates Fantin's method of combining and mixing motifs from his still lifes, adjusting the relationships of colors, shapes and point of view, thereby creating wholly new compositions. The round crystal vase, half-filled with water, the large hydrangea blooms and the saucer of strawberries which appear in the Museum's painting also appear in the Lisbon still life. The red lacquer-ware tray with black interior, the whole and sectioned oranges and the gilt-edged white china of the Museum's *Flowers and Fruit* appear in the Washington painting as well. It is tempting to try to devise a sequence for these paintings. However, with the location of several other recorded fruit and flower still lifes of 1866 unknown, it is practically impossible to do so. Toledo's *Flowers and Fruit* quite clearly serves as a link between the two other paintings, but we cannot say if it was painted between them, or as a selective amalgam after them.

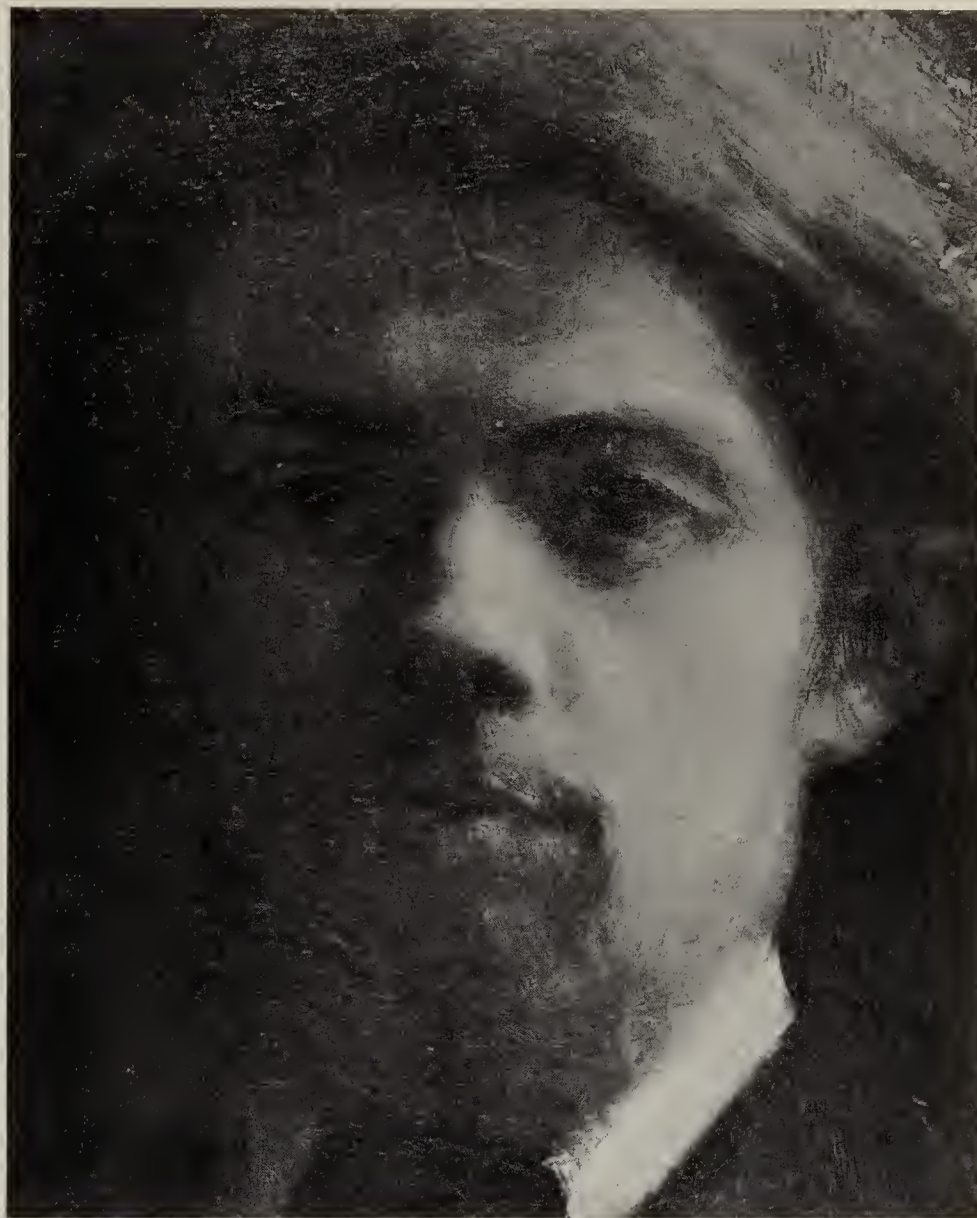
What is clear, however, is that Toledo's painting is a more subtle and reserved work than its related pictures for several reasons. First, it is more remote from us spatially. Instead of employing the more obvious *repoussoir* device of the knife or tray extending dramatically over the table edge, invading our space more aggressively, in the Toledo still life Fantin has kept all the objects well back from the edge of the table. The choice of a vertical rather than horizontal format for the Museum's painting also limits the number of elements to be included. Although equal in size to the two related still lifes, it has a more compact, pyramidal composition, rather than the expansive spreading of elements seen in the other canvases. And Fantin has chosen to emphasize the large bouquet of hydrangeas and moss roses in the Toledo painting, more delicate in their coloring and so much more slight in volume and weight than the solid geometry of the pears and peaches in the Washington and Lisbon canvases. By using a dark, plum-brown table cloth on which to display his objects, rather than the bright white cloth or the shining wood table top of the other paintings, he has also eschewed their stronger reflections and tonal contrasts.

Fantin took obvious delight in contrasting and harmonizing various shapes and colors. There is a variety of shapes mainly round or oval in the Toledo still life beginning with the central anchoring orange and crystal vase, on to the round forms as false ovals of the saucer and the flowers, the ovals and half-ovals of the lacquer tray and orange sections and finally the irregular but related shapes of the strawberries and the sugar bowl. The formal clarity of these objects is further enhanced by the simple rectangle of the table top and the completely plain background.

Fantin said of color and music that they addressed themselves to the same region of the imagination. And, indeed, there is something nearly musical in his sensitivity to harmony and counterpoint in color. In the Museum's *Flowers and Fruit*, he has employed a wide range of colors but the primary contrast is that of the softly shadowed gray background and prominent whites against the warm natural colors which register more sharply by this contrast. With the exception of the blue green leaves and stems, the colors which predominate are pink, red, orange, yellow and the plum-brown of the table cloth. Fantin groups almost all of these warm colors together in harmony in the lower half of the picture. The much paler bouquet, with only a few hints of the warm colors below, receives the primary benefit of the gray background. Thus the most fragile hues within the blossoms can sing forth.

Never really emphasizing his brushwork for its own sake, Fantin shows a rich but understated painterliness in the Toledo *Flowers and Fruit*. The flowers are carefully drawn with the brush, composed of many small, thick strokes of paint. Varied in thickness and hue these strokes create a palpably three-dimensional blossom. With great subtlety Fantin has given an added sense of space and atmosphere by the thinness of the gray background paint which permits the canvas grain to show through. The flecks of white and blue paint which create the reflection in the crystal vase, the placement of the brightest and thickest brushstrokes of the flowers, and the soft shadow of darker underpaint behind the bouquet, show us

Figure 6
HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836-1904)
Self Portrait, 1860
Oil on canvas
10¼ x 8¼ in. (26 x 21 cm.)
Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Sonnenberg, New York



the light coming from the upper right. The bright creamy impasto of the sugar bowl is the most painterly brushwork of all, but most astonishing however, is the tangibility Fantin has given to the soft wedges of the orange sections. Brushstrokes drawing the form, the thickest strokes of white form the crest of each wedge where the membrane is thickest, thinner strokes forming thinner membranes, clouding the rich orange pigment beneath. In them we can readily see why Fantin is considered one of the greatest still-life painters of the 19th century.

Incredibly gifted as a still-life painter, Fantin was no less fine a portraitist. Although he had many portrait commissions, he was particularly active in painting portraits of his family and friends. However, this was not simply a matter of preference, although he was very close to his family, but because he was very demanding of his sitters' time. Later in his career when many people sought to have him paint their portrait,

he would often require as many as thirty sittings to complete the painting.

Early in his career he painted many self-portraits and he often remarked that he never did find a more patient subject, always ready when he was, always willing to stay as long as he wished. One such self-portrait is the small, very painterly and romantic one in the Sonnenberg Collection in New York (Fig. 6). Painted in 1860, it shows quite well the deep shadows which Fantin often employed in his early portraits.

The Museum's *Portrait of the Artist's Sister* (Fig. 7), the second work by Fantin to enter Toledo's collection, is neither signed nor dated. For many years it has been considered to be a sketch for the portrait *La Liseuse* (Fig. 8), the artist's sister Marie reading, exhibited by Fantin at the Salon of 1861. While the woman in Toledo's portrait definitely seems to be Marie Fantin-Latour, the 1861 date cannot be correct for several rea-



Figure 7

HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836-1904)

Portrait of the Artist's Sister, about 1880

Oil on canvas

19½ x 15½ in. (49.5 x 39.3 cm.)

Ex-coll: Mrs. Clifford Addams (Inez Bates); Dr. Charles Peacock

Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey

55.84

Figure 8
 HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836-1904)
La Liseuse, 1861
 Oil on canvas
 Signed on upper left: Fantin 1861
 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 32 $\frac{11}{16}$ in. (100 x 83 cm.)
 Musée du Louvre, Galerie du Jeu de Paume



sons. The portrait entitled *La Liseuse* is obviously a very different composition, with which the Museum's portrait cannot be connected. Not only is the pose different, but also the dress style and hair style. The low, spreading collar is an 1860's fashion as is the hair parted in the middle, pulled to the side and full at the back.

Fantin's dual portrait of his sisters Nathalie and Marie, *The Two Sisters* (Fig. 9), signed and dated 1859, shows the same costume and coiffure. Nathalie is at the left, full face, Marie in profile at the right. In the realist tradition of "unposed" genre portraits, showing people at work or at leisure, both *La Liseuse* and *The Two Sisters* make clear their early origin.

The Toledo portrait is quite different from these. Instead of the low, spreading collar of the 1860's, we see the high standing collar and close-fitting military tunic with peaked shoulders which came into fashion in the 1880's. Instead of the center

part and full frame of hair at the back of the neck, we see the hair directly pulled back and unparted forming a high crown atop the head.

However, the woman in the Museum's portrait is Marie Fantin-Latour. The same full lips and firm chin, the same slightly turned up nose and flat cheek bones we see in *La Liseuse* and in profile in *The Two Sisters* are present here. And the family resemblance is equally remarkable if we look at Fantin's own *Self-Portrait* and the melancholy face of Nathalie in *The Two Sisters*. The Russian blood which the Fantin children inherited from their mother, born Hélène de Naidenoff, shows clearly.

Fantin was very close to his sister and it is very moving to read his letter to Edwards upon her departure from Paris in 1866, to marry a Russian army colonel and live in faraway St. Petersburg. With his sister Nathalie incurably ill, Marie's departure left Fantin with the full responsibility of his parents' care. In Charles Chetham's excellent



Figure 9
 HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836-1904)
The Two Sisters, 1859
 Oil on canvas
 Signed on lower left: Fantin 59
 38⁹/₁₆ x 51³/₁₆ in. (98 x 30 cm.)
 The St. Louis Art Museum

translation the letter reads: "Finally it is done, she has left us. It is most painful. I am no longer what I was, it makes me very old." Yet this sorrow must have been assuaged from time to time by visits of Marie, henceforth Madame Yanovski, to her family in Paris. The extremely private nature of Fantin's personal life casts a veil of ignorance over this question, but it would be odd indeed had Marie never returned to Paris. In fact, a portrait of her daughter Sonia, Fantin's niece (Fig. 10), painted by him in 1890 does lend credence to the possibility of other earlier visits to Paris by Marie. But it is highly unlikely that Toledo's portrait was also painted in 1890. Marie was twenty-nine when she left France to marry in 1866, a fact which gave her brother pause in his sorrow as he did not think she would have another chance to marry. By 1890 she would have been fifty-three. Although the face in the Museum's portrait is certainly older and somewhat careworn compared to the girl pictured in *La Liseuse* or *The Two Sisters*, it cannot be the face of a woman past fifty.

Figure 10
 HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836-1904)
 Portrait of Sonia, 1890
 Oil on canvas
 Signed and inscribed on upper right:
A ma chère nièce Sonia, Fantin 90
 43 x 31 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (109.2 x 81 cm.)
 National Gallery of Art, Washington
 Chester Dale Collection



Fantin's brushwork definitely rules out a date in the early 1860's when he was much heavier in the application of paint, as we can see in the *Self-Portrait* of 1860. But above all, the strong light coming from above which strikes the sitter squarely on the brow and illuminates her entire face, is most typical of Fantin's paintings of the late 1870's and early 1880's. Rather than the deep Rembrandtesque shadow of the *Self-Portrait* of 1860, the Museum's portrait shows precisely the same light effects we see in *La Famille Dubourg* (Fig. 11) of 1878, a group portrait of his wife, her sister and parents, and *Autour du Piano* (Fig. 12) of 1885, a kind of homage to Wagner, with the composer Chabrier at the piano and fellow admirers of the German composer around him.

It was during this period of his career that Fantin became very interested in photography. As Aaron Scharff has written in his book, *Art and Photography*, several writers of Fantin's own time and since have noted the photographic quality of his

portraits at this time. In fact, the gentleman seated at the far right of *Autour du Piano*, Amedée Pigeon, was part of a group which experimented with photography in Fantin's studio using artificial light. We also know that Fantin became something of an amateur photographer himself, often taking a picture of friends when they visited his studio. For a portraitist who insisted on so many sittings, photographs must have been a considerable help. Perhaps a photograph was of aid in painting the Museum's portrait.

As in Toledo's *Flowers and Fruit* there is an extraordinary sense of atmosphere enveloping the figure. The paint, carefully applied in short strokes at sharp angles to each other, creates a strongly sculptural figure and a vibrating semi transparent atmosphere around her. The red underpaint comes through the gray background and helps to form the warmer flesh tones at her shadowed ear and throughout her face. Along the contours of her head and shoulders, often at right angle to them,



Figure 11
 HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836-1904)
La Famille Dubourg, 1879
 Oil on canvas
 Signed on lower left: Fantin 79
 57 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 67 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (146.5 x 170.5 cm.)
 Musée du Louvre, Galerie du Jeu de Paume

Fantin has made short stiff strokes with his brush, adjusting the contour and creating a halo effect. This can also be seen in *La Famille Dubourg* and *Autour du Piano*.

The light which streams directly downward on the figure, casting sharp shadows beneath her nose, her lower lip and her chin, emphasizes the handsome strength of her features. One can readily believe this is a woman who waited eight years to marry until her fiancé attained the rank of colonel in the army. Only the softest blush of pink in her cheeks and lips adds a note of warmer color to the stark palette. Only the white butterfly brooch, perhaps a reference to Fantin's friend Whistler who used a butterfly as his signature, relieves the severity of her costume.

The earliest known owner of the Museum's portrait, as Charles Chetham has written, was also Whistler's last student. Thus the possibility does exist that Toledo's *Portrait of the Artist's Sister*



was painted for Whistler as a memento of Marie, whom he would have known during his early career in Paris.

Whatever may have been the circumstances of its painting, the Museum's portrait, because of its strong light and vibrating brushwork, and the elements of costume and hair style, should be dated to about 1880. At that time, Fantin's sister, who seems to have been a woman of strong character, would have been about forty-three years old. Marrying at twenty-nine, giving birth to her daughter Sonia in her late thirties, in 1880 she would still have been a young mother. Her portrait, painted at the peak of Fantin's powers, has a depth of character and sense of living presence which few other portraitists of the nineteenth century could surpass.

William J. Chiego

Figure 12
 HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836-1904)
Autour du Piano, 1885
 Oil on canvas
 Signed on upper right: Fantin 85
 63 x 87 $\frac{7}{16}$ in. (160 x 222 cm.)
 Musée du Louvre, Galerie du Jeu de Paume



Figure 13
Hôtel de la Païva, Paris, Façade
Completed 1866
PIERRE MANGUIN (1815-1869), Architect
Photo: Archives Photographiques, Paris

A CONSOLE TABLE BY DALOU

The history of furniture in the nineteenth century is too often a history of the Industrial Revolution. While initiation of the factory system, invention of new machines and new designs, and the specialization of labor had an enormous influence on all the arts, the idea that furniture could still be made for a particular person and according to an individual taste was never entirely lost. Nor was the eighteenth century conception of furniture as an integral part of an overall architectural scheme completely forgotten. Such is the history of a console table made in 1864 for one of the most famous Parisian houses of its time, the Hôtel de la Païva. Its power lies not in mass-produced ornament but sculptural elegance, and its originality not in mere technique but in masterly craftsmanship and innovative design. Yet, what most distinguishes the table from an industrial product is its individual and intimate character which resulted from the combined sensibilities of the sculptor who created it, Aimé-Jules Dalou, and the extraordinary woman who commissioned it, the Marquise de Païva.

The Marquise was one of the most remarkable figures of the Second Empire—adventurous and calculating, possessed of an indefatigable will and the highest ambitions. She was born Esther Pauline Blanche Lachmann in Moscow of Jewish-Polish refugees in either 1819 or 1826. The uncertainty of her birthdate reflects the mystery in which she wrapped her bitterly resented beginnings. From Moscow, where she had first married at seventeen, given birth to a son, and then abandoned both husband and child, she travelled in 1841 to Ems, a German resort. According to the most reliable accounts, it was there she met Henri Herz, a noted pianist and composer, with whom she moved to Paris. Her liason with this musician combined with

her beauty, quick intelligence, and unlimited energy were the keys to a fashionable world of artists and intellectuals. However, Herz's resources and stamina proved unequal to his mistress. After five years and the birth of Herz's child, Thérèse (the name she adopted upon arrival in Paris) was turned out of the house by his family and friends. She left for London in about 1848, once again penniless except for an insatiable ambition. There, she turned various amorous adventures to financial reward. Returning to Paris, now free of her first husband who had died in 1849, she married in 1851 a Portuguese nobleman, Marquis Albina Francisco de Païva y Araujo, who, though impoverished, possessed the title she desperately wanted.

In exchange for the title of Marquise, Thérèse gave her second husband little more than minimal financial support and less of the pleasure of marriage. Within a year she had given the Marquis up to become the delight of a young German officer, Count Henckel von Donnersmarck, heir to a considerable fortune. Although she was regarded by conventional Parisian society as an outcast, her guests, a male group of artists, musicians, critics, and businessmen, enjoyed her incisive nature and multiple charms. In 1855, with the help of her German lover, she acquired the property at 25 Avenue des Champs-Élysées on which she would build, as she said to her friends, "the most beautiful house in Paris." The house was not completed until 1866, the interiors alone occupying almost four years of labor. Befitting the rather frenzied and superficial atmosphere of the Second Empire, occupancy by the Count and Countess (they finally married in 1871) lasted only nine years. The couple departed for Henckel's home in Germany in 1875. After Thérèse's death in 1884,



Figure 14 (and back cover)
AIME-JULES DALOU (1838-1902)
Woman Reading, about 1877
Bronze
Signed on base: Dalou
Height: 22 in. (55.9 cm.)
Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey
63.35

Figure 15
AIME-JULES DALOU (1838-1902)
Model for the Monument to Delacroix
Bronze
Signed on base: Dalou
Inscribed on pedestal: Eugène Delacroix
Ses Admirateurs/1798-1863
Height: 34 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (88.2 cm.)
Ex-coll: Heirs of A.A. Hébrard, Paris
Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey
64.41

Figure 16
AIME-JULES DALOU (1838-1902)
Console Table, 1864
Bronze and ormolu with breccolito marble and onyx top
Height: 42 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (109 cm.); Width of top: 63 in. (160 cm.);
Depth of top: 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (57.9 cm.)
Ex-coll: Marquise de Paiva; Raoul Millais
Gift of Florence Scott Libbey
60.32



the Hôtel de la Paiva was sold by the Count to a German banker. It changed hands once more before 1904 when it became the home of its present occupant, the distinguished Travellers' Club of Paris.

Despite the Marquise's admirable artistic intentions, particularly her desire for a great amount of sculpture executed especially for her, and the combined efforts of several outstanding talents in addition to Dalou, the Hôtel does not rise above the excessively gaudy taste of the Second Empire. Very generally, the mixture of Italian and French Renaissance styles, evident on the exterior (Fig. 13) and most fully elaborate interior, is typical both of the period style at mid-century and of the Marquise's personality. The immediate effect is one of lavishness and superabundance. The Grand Salon, for instance, not only had four identical console tables by Dalou but also a red and white marble fireplace with female allegorical figures of *Harmony* and *Music* by the sculptor Delaplanche.



In addition, there were richly carved moldings, alternating brown and gold, and panels of antique rose satin upon which paintings were hung. In the ceiling a great recessed oval was carved in which Paul Baudry painted *Day Pursuing Night*, and in which most observers have recognized the Marquise in the guise of the elusive figure of Night. So densely embellished is the entire house that one's eye could easily pass over the individual piece or detail. Like much of the architecture and sculpture of the period, it is far more elaborate than many of the Renaissance originals that were its inspiration.

The reputation of Jules Dalou rests today primarily on his more intimate and naturalistic pieces of the 1870's (from the time of his political exile in England) and on his public monuments erected in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. These phases of Dalou's career are also represented in the Museum's collection by the lovely bronze, *Woman Reading* (Fig. 14), and a cast of the model

for the monument in the Luxembourg Gardens to the painter Eugène Delacroix (Fig. 15). Dalou's later success, however, was not easily won and, indeed, begins with his commissions at the Hôtel de la Païva.

The son of working class parents, Jules Dalou was born in 1838 in Paris. By 1864, the year of the Païva commission, he had officially executed only two works: a sculpture in the round for the Salon of 1861 and a bas-relief for the Prix de Rome competition in 1862. Yet, despite the apparent lack of productivity, he had already been the recipient of a diverse number of sculptural influences. Early contact and training with Carpeaux was his chief formative influence in addition to the drawing classes he attended at Lecoq de Boisbaudran's and his official schooling in the studio of Duret at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Coupled with this were earlier stylistic sources such as the works of the seventeenth century sculptors Coysevox and Girardon, encountered on frequent trips to Versailles, and



Figure 17
 AIMÉ-JULES DALOU (1838-1902)
 Young Girl with Grapes, 1864
 Height: 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (100 cm.)
 The Travellers' Club (Hôtel de la Païva), Paris
 Photo: H. W. Janson



Figure 18
 JEAN-BAPTISTE CARPEAUX (1827-1875)
 Neapolitan Fisherboy, 1861
 Marble
 Height: 36 in. (91.5 cm.)
 National Gallery of Art, Washington
 Samuel H. Kress Collection

the work of the Renaissance masters, Goujon and Pilon. It was during this earliest phase of his career that Dalou, along with the painters Gérôme, Picou and Thirion, and the sculptors Barrias and Carrier-Belleuse, was invited to work on the decoration of the Hôtel de la Païva. Living in poverty and working only sporadically with goldsmiths and bronze manufacturers at the time, Dalou welcomed the invitation.

The first signed works Dalou executed for the house were four bronze plaquettes for the library doors. The architect Pierre Manquin and the Marquise then entrusted him with a large plaster bas-relief for the dining room ceiling (exhibited in the Salon of 1864), figures for a marble mantelpiece in the same room, and finally, four identical console tables for the Grand Salon. The firm of Barbedienne was responsible for the casting of the tables. One of these tables is now in Toledo (Fig. 16), a second is in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs,

Paris. The present locations, however, of the third and fourth table are not known.

The four console tables were originally placed on either side of two doorways in the Grand Salon. Now isolated from its original context, Toledo's Dalou table remains a striking image that unites the sculptural presence of bronze figurative supports with the decorative charm of an inlaid marble top. The Marquise was fortunate in her choice of artists, since a table of this nature could easily have been vulgarized in the hands of a less skilled craftsman. Artistic interests and superior craftsmanship were maintained by Dalou in a design that is at once both simple and opulent.

Except for the marble top, the table is entirely of bronze. The rectangular top is animated by an inset marble design of dark red and mottled yellow bands, which in turn surround three alabaster panels. The rigidity of the geometric pattern, char-

acteristic of the period, is relieved by the swirling ground of Breccolito marble, and its architectonic structure softly gives way to a subtle vibrance. Surrounding the top is a gilt bronze border, expertly cast with a uniform band of gadroons above a ring of uprising foliage. The platform on which the supporting figures kneel is also gilt bronze encased within molded and beaded borders. The simple elegance of these additions is admirably integrated into the piece, their light gold tonality providing a foil for the rich dark brown patina of the supporting figures.

The use of figures as table supports was not a nineteenth century innovation. The ancient Greeks and Romans extensively employed the human figure as a decorative and architectural element. French Renaissance furniture and Italian furniture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was often characterized by elaborate systems of carved foliage and human figures, which related directly to the boldness and solidity of contemporary sculpture. The Empire style of furniture, which preceded this piece by only fifty years, also used human figures and mythical creatures as supports for decorative tables and chairs. The motif of the kneeling figure was not a contemporary invention either. Dalou was certainly familiar with seventeenth and eighteenth century prototypes, such as Pigalle's *Mercury Tying His Sandal* and Coysevox's *Kneeling Venus*, as well as ancient Greek or Roman precedents. This is evident not only in the bronze youths who support the table, but also in Dalou's own crouching *Young Girl with Grapes* (Fig. 17) in the same house. The male figures are closely related to her in their dependence on traditional sources combined with their direct relationship to a contemporary one, Carpeaux's *Neopolitan Fisherboy* (Fig. 18) which was exhibited in the Salon of 1863. The influence of Dalou's teacher is unmistakable, and the young sculptor openly admitted his admiration for the master.

However, although Dalou did not invent either the design or the motif, the large scale and independence of the idealized figures is a significant innovation. It allows the youths to exist first as sculpture, separately conceived, and second, as functional and decorative supports. The problem of integrating sculpture into a piece of furniture is a challenge that Dalou solved with a sure sense of design and sculptural ingenuity. The stylized naturalism of the boys' slender limbs, delicately modeled torsos, and smoothly articulated surfaces are reflective of the sculptor's brilliant technique (Figs. 19 & 20). His highly competent sense of



Figure 19
Detail of Figure 16



Figure 20
Detail of Figure 16

design is confirmed by the harmonious balance, both visually and literally, between the firm horizontal of the marble top and the graceful and delicate youths who support it. It neither crushes the figures, nor is it so slight as to appear to float above them, detracting from the image of weight and support. The simple unity of line and mass combined with the natural warmth of the materials achieves richness without resorting to excessive detailing and applied ornament. The table's ingenious though simple construction marks an advanced stage in Dalou's development both as a sculptor and a designer. One can imagine the Marquise's delight upon first viewing the smooth-flowing, sensual elegance of the tables.

Although the style of the table and of the house as a whole may have been inspired by works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and contemporary pieces by Carpeaux and Carrier-Belleuse, the significance of Dalou's activity at the Hôtel de la Païva remains a primary influence in his long and distinguished career. It was this first private commission which gave the artist the necessary self-confidence to establish his career as a decorative sculptor. The commission, in general, and the tables, specifically, were Dalou's first introduction to the problem of integrating sculpture and decoration. This is most important in terms of his later work such as the *Monument to Delacroix*. The success of this and other large scale ensembles hinged on his ability to combine a number of abstract themes and rhetorical figures into a harmonious whole.

The influence of Carpeaux, so evident in the form and treatment of the table supports and the *Young Girl with Grapes* is retained throughout the 1870's and 1880's in his allegorical pieces and portrait busts. The console tables, in addition to the other works at the Hôtel, are the earliest indication of the high finish, impersonal classicism, and intimate grace that appear in Dalou's English works of the 1870's. The expert modelling and devotion to nature, already apparent in the bronze youths, become the key to the last phase of his career, a series of realistic sketches of workers designed for a monument to labor in the 1890's.

In its link to an artistic tradition that was above all French, the decorative work of Jules Dalou at the Hôtel de la Païva and the console table now in Toledo strongly reflect the eclectic nature of the period in which he flourished.

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